Security Council

Fifty-fifth Year

Provisional

4120th Meeting

Friday, 24 March 2000, 3.15 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Chowdhury	(Bangladesh)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cappagli
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Namibia	Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraphs 28 and 30 of resolution 1284 (1999) and paragraph 5 of resolution 1281 (1999) (S/2000/208)

00-35967 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting resumed at 3.15 p.m.

Mr. Ward (Jamaica): I thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2000/208) on the humanitarian situation in Iraq and for his remarks to us this morning. I also welcome the presence in the Council Chamber of Ms. Bellamy and Mr. Sevan, whose work we value greatly as we carry out our responsibilities as a member of the Security Council.

My delegation is disturbed by the continuing dire humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people as outlined in the Secretary-General's report and in his statement, and as described in the 1999 report on child and maternal mortality issued by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). We welcome the recommendations put forward to improve the situation.

It is undeniable that sanctions are a necessary and legitimate tool for the execution of Security Council decisions. The deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Iraq, however, raises questions about the wider issue of the effectiveness of sanctions in general, and about the sanctions on Iraq in particular. The Council must find ways to balance the requirement that Iraq honour its obligations under the various Security Council resolutions and the Council's humanitarian obligation to minimize hardship on ordinary Iraqi civilians. Sanctions regimes established by the Council must be effective, focused and of limited duration. My delegation, therefore, welcomes the establishment by the Security Council of a working group on sanctions, which will review this issue and recommend changes as appropriate.

We want to emphasize that the Council must not become involved in a sterile effort to attribute blame. Rather, we must focus on finding a solution to the difficult humanitarian situation in Iraq. The Iraqi people must be our foremost priority in this regard. An important step in this process will be objectively to evaluate the extent to which the sanctions regime has engendered the current situation. Such an impact assessment is long overdue and should be undertaken immediately.

Clearly, we are committed to the implementation of the humanitarian provisions of resolution 1284 (1999), which the Council adopted out of concern for improving the humanitarian situation inside Iraq. We are therefore anxious to explore in the Council all possible means to bring about the results for which the resolution was adopted. We support the efforts made by the Office of the Iraq Programme to review procedures for contracting, application processing, obtaining approval by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 661 (1990), and timely distribution of humanitarian supplies within Iraq.

The provision of humanitarian relief alone, however, will not effectively reverse the downward trend in the statistical indicators outlined in these reports. We believe that the humanitarian situation in Iraq will continue to be dire in the absence of a sustained revival of the Iraqi economy. The restoration of the economic infrastructure is essential to reversing the grim public health indicators and returning them to the levels and trajectories that existed before 1991.

An important hindrance to the early implementation of the humanitarian provisions of resolution 1284 (1999) is that of the holds placed in critical sectors, in particular holds placed on spare parts and equipment for the oil industry sector and on spare parts for electricity generation. We would welcome the removal of these holds, and look forward to progress in the processing of applications.

Removing the ceiling on oil exports is negated by a lack of capacity to sustain increased production levels. We reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's recommendation on the necessary additions to the current allocation for oil spare parts and equipment to reverse what has been described as the lamentable state of the oil industry. Of much concern to us is the Secretary-General's report that the increased level of production achieved in November 1999 was no longer sustainable, and that production in recent weeks had decreased by 300,000 barrels per day.

Of equal importance to the future development of Iraq is the rehabilitation of its electricity infrastructure. We note from the report of the Secretary-General that equipment for this sector valued at $488 million is on hold and that this has delayed necessary maintenance work, resulting in a continuing deterioration of the electricity production and distribution network.

My delegation calls upon countries which have imposed holds to take all necessary steps to ensure that swift investigations are conducted with a view to the early removal of these holds. Perhaps Mr. Sevan can advise the Council of any recent reduction in the level of holds, and of what, if any, impact this may be expected to have on the humanitarian programme.

The lamentable state of Iraq's health sector is also cause for great concern. We support the recommendation by the Secretary-General to have substantial increases in the scale and scope of inputs into the sector. We also recognize the importance of implementing complementary inputs to address the causes of poor health conditions. It is important and more cost-effective to not only treat diseases but also prevent them from occurring in the first place. Therefore, the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation, as well as vaccination against preventable diseases, is crucial to maintaining the health of the population.

The long-term, detrimental effect of the malnourishment of 700,000 children, as stated in paragraph 124 of the Secretary-General's report, is of grave concern. The combination of potential developmental problems caused by chronic malnutrition and the lack of an appropriate teaching and learning environment in Iraq's schools will have lasting negative effects on future generations of Iraqis.

The report of the Secretary-General's review of the oil-for-food programme, issued on April 28, 1999; the results of the UNICEF survey of infant and maternal mortality rates in Iraq; and the presentations made here today raise serious humanitarian concerns. These reports make it clear that the deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Iraq is pervasive and chronic.

The UNICEF figures presented in its 1999 report on infant and maternal mortality in Iraq are particularly alarming, as they indicate clearly that children under five years of age are dying at more than twice the rate of 10 years ago.

It is particularly tragic that Iraq's children have been made victims of a system which was not of their choosing. Undoubtedly, the humanitarian conditions which exist in Iraq today will continue adversely to affect the people of Iraq long after the sanctions are lifted. It may be useful if Ms. Bellamy could elaborate on the relationship between the sanctions and the humanitarian conditions of the children of Iraq.

Council members must face the facts presented here today with a positive and constructive attitude if we are to make progress in alleviating the grim situation. In this regard, the Secretary-General's recommendations set out in his report must be given serious consideration by all concerned.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): I first thank the Secretary-General for his very comprehensive and useful report and for his succinct introduction of the report this morning.

At last we are getting down to operational discussion of the implementation of resolution 1284 (1999). A major motivation for the United Kingdom in promoting that resolution was the need to improve the humanitarian situation in Iraq. This debate has to focus on practical solutions. There is a great deal which can be done without crossing the well-worn lines of political differences, which do not have to inhibit us today.

The implementation of resolution 1284 (1999) is the key, and I think we have Council consensus on this. The "humanitarian" section of that resolution is being put into action now, but the faster we can move on the whole resolution, the sooner we shall reach the objective of sanctions suspended and security, including control of weapons of mass destruction, assured. Hans Blix has been appointed, with all our support, to establish and lead the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). We hope that Iraq will agree to accept UNMOVIC so that the Commission can finish the job of disarming Iraq and continue effective monitoring so that we can all be confident that the region is secure. We encourage Iraq to cooperate in this.

Let me be clear on a fundamental point. If Iraq makes that choice, we in the United Kingdom are committed to the reality of the suspension of sanctions, and, when Iraq has fulfilled its obligations, their lifting. Once Iraq takes that watershed decision, I firmly believe that suspension could take place in a matter of months.

If Iraq does not take that opportunity, even so resolution 1284 (1999) offers the potential to do a significant amount for the people of Iraq in the meantime. This is not just the United Kingdom's view; it is also the Secretary-General's, as he makes clear in his report, and that of others who have spoken today. Already the ceiling on Iraq's oil sales has been lifted, allowing Iraq to export a potential $17 billion this year, a huge increase on past years, and the highest level since 1980. We have approved the lists of educational, health, agricultural and food goods for import into Iraq, rendering the whole process of getting the goods into Iraq smoother and faster, so that a vast array of civilian goods can be imported without any delay. The sanctions Committee is looking at other positive measures. We

await the United Nations recommendations on a local cash component, which will make a real difference locally.

It is good to have the Council once again in operational mode on Iraq. We must implement these measures quickly, constructively and effectively. The United Kingdom is ready to approve the Secretary-General's recommendation for an additional $600 million for oil spare parts. We look forward to a Council decision on that and related issues.

Many members are concerned about the number of holds on contracts for Iraq. It is time to put this problem in perspective. The Council has to implement all its resolutions. Only as a corpus do they ensure the security of the region. Iraq must not import items it could use to rebuild its military or weapons-of-mass-destruction capability. This is our core collective responsibility. It cannot be left to one side. Yet only a small minority of Council members assume a full responsibility for doing this. The rest of the Council, frankly, assumes that we will. If we did not, Iraq would be able to obtain dangerous items. Take three examples of contracts we have stopped in the last few weeks alone. We have queried a contract for a neutron generator which can be used in the development of nuclear weapons. We have held a contract for the provision of state-of-the-art military radio communication equipment, of far greater capability than needed, say, by the health ministry. We have held a contract for military respirators, whose only use is for military chemical-weapons or biological-weapons purposes.

The United Kingdom will process its examination contracts quickly and objectively. But we will not be diverted from carrying our share of responsibility to prevent Iraq from rearming. Apart from this small number of dual-use cases, the biggest cause of holds is simply a lack of information on contracts. Sometimes multimillion-dollar contracts are submitted with one sentence of information describing the goods in that contract. In other words, we do not even know what is being imported by Iraq. This is clearly too low a standard for the Council to accept. We encourage the work which the United Nations is doing with Iraq and its contractors to improve the submission of contracts.

Another cause of holds is the lack of information about the end-use of oil-for-food products in Iraq. This could be improved by more effective monitoring and observation in Iraq. Every resolution concerning the humanitarian programme, beginning with resolution 986 (1995), through 1153 (1998), and finally 1284 (1999), calls for the United Nations to ensure that goods are used for the purposes authorized in Iraq. Although the programme has more than trebled in size since 1996 and now involves complex infrastructure projects, the number of United Nations observers in Iraq has not increased since the programme's inception.

This does not make sense; nor does it give us the confidence that all potential dual-use items are being properly monitored. We should all work with the Secretariat to increase the number and effectiveness of observers. Perhaps this is something to be considered in the context of the draft resolution approving extra spending on oil spare parts.

But whatever the real deficiencies we have to face in the contract system, the United Kingdom does all it can to approve contracts and avoid unnecessary hold-ups. Our procedures for the review of contracts have been examined to minimize all delay. We welcome the Secretary-General's proposal this morning that a mechanism should be established to review holds. But let us keep the matter in perspective; the United Kingdom has approved 98.8 per cent of all contracts submitted to the sanctions Committee under the oil-for-food programme — 98.8 per cent. I welcome the statement from the United States representative this morning that Washington will now make a constructive effort to refine its holds procedures.

What else can we do to maximize the revenues for the humanitarian programme? Yesterday our sanctions Committee heard a briefing from the Multinational Interception Force on its operations in the Gulf and on the enforcement of the Council's resolutions. The Committee was presented with clear evidence that since mid-1999 smugglers have stepped up their activities to the point of now exporting illegally over 400,000 tons per month of gas oil from Iraq, using the protection of Iranian territorial waters to transport oil to traders in the United Arab Emirates.

The Committee has also heard convincing evidence that smugglers are also exporting oil through other neighbouring States, including Turkey. The potential revenue from all these operations must now exceed $1 billion per year. Instead of being used to rebuild a hospital in Baghdad or provide clean water for a village, this money is being spent by Saddam Hussein's regime for the sustenance and comfort of the Iraqi elite and military; perhaps even for the support of Iranian dissident groups, an ironic point when you consider the Iranian

protection for smuggling through the Gulf. We urge Iraq's neighbouring States to take steps to prevent this illegal trade and clamp down on those who seek to profit at the expense of the Iraqi people.

Ambassador Fowler, through his work on the Angola sanctions Committee, has set us an excellent example of how the Council should get to grips with sanctions enforcement so that sanctions have the effect intended. We know that would benefit the long-suffering Angolan people. We should follow that example in the Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) and our work in the Council itself. We have been engaged much more intensively on Iraq than on Angola, and the regional and international security implications are even greater. It is time to develop an operational response, focusing first on monitoring holds and smuggling as a composite package to support the improvement in procedures in the resolution 661 (1990) Committee. We should also consider including the legislation of additional oil outlets and legalizing other currently-illegal oil flows in order to transfer oil and revenue into the oil-for-food programme, where they belong. This illegal traffic insulates the Baghdad regime from the effects of the Council's policy, which is to take sanctions suspension and disarmament together. Even worse, it denies the Iraqi people the full resources that should be available to them.

In addition to the provisions I have already described, resolution 1284 (1999) brings the Council's focus more closely onto a humanitarian issue that should concern us all here. Since the Gulf war, Iraqi obstruction has constantly hampered efforts to account for the whereabouts of the 600 and more Kuwaitis and others who are missing. Iraq has provided sufficient information to close only three files. Since 1999 Iraq has refused to attend the meetings of the Tripartite Commission, the body which aims to resolve these cases. Further progress has therefore been deliberately prevented. Meanwhile, the families of the missing are left to suffer. Iraq has also failed to account for huge quantities of stolen Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. As a result, Kuwait is still a society and a country traumatized by the 1990 invasion, a fact witnessed by those of our spouses who recently visited the Gulf. I very much welcome the Secretary-General's appointment of Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov, as provided for under resolution 1284 (1999), as his high-level coordinator. The United Kingdom looks forward to his report and will do everything we can to assist his work.

One or two delegations referred earlier in this debate to action in the no-fly zones. The no-fly zones were established in support of Security Council resolution 688 (1991), which called on Iraq to end its repression of the civilian population. That repression continues. These ends are justified under international law, in response to a situation of overwhelming humanitarian necessity. The United Kingdom is not prepared to leave Kurds, Shiahs or others exposed to renewed threat from the Iraqi air force. Given its record, none of us can doubt that Baghdad would resume this activity if it could. Our aircraft target only aircraft and ground facilities which target them. There is no bombing campaign. The tempo of activity is actually determined by Iraq — not by the coalition forces. If Iraq stopped attacking our aircraft, we would stop responding to this aggression. Our action is strictly limited to proportionate responses and carefully targeted to avoid civilian casualties. Those that occur we deeply regret, but we should beware of Iraqi statistics that tend to inflate military and civilian casualties for propaganda effect. There would be no risk if there were no Iraqi threat.

Before finishing, I would like to pay tribute to the efforts of all the United Nations personnel involved in the implementation of the humanitarian programme, and in particular to the Executive Director of the Office of the Iraq Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund. Theirs is arduous work in the most difficult of circumstances, but they have worked with courage and dedication, and they can be proud of their efforts in implementing the largest and most complicated humanitarian programme in the history of this Organization. We should all offer them our continued support and help.

As today's debate has made clear, there is much to be done to improve the situation in Iraq. But the full solution lies in implementation of this Council's resolutions, and in particular the programme we have devised in resolution 1284 (1999). We may want sanctions to end, but the Council cannot just put a line through its responsibility for the security of the region. As the Secretary-General said this morning, the only satisfactory outcome is for Iraq to return to full compliance with the decisions of the Council, so that sanctions can be ended and the Iraqi people restored to a normal life. We welcome his suggestion that there should be a constant review of progress under resolution 1284 (1999), and we strongly support his call for Iraq to cooperate with that resolution, and with this Council, so that we can work towards the suspension and the lifting of sanctions. If Iraq refuses that opportunity, then it is the Council's duty, with the Secretariat, to make the most

of the huge opportunity offered by resolution 1284 (1999) to make a difference to the lives of ordinary Iraqis.

Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi (Namibia): We thank the Secretary-General for his report on the humanitarian programme in Iraq. This report provides a valuable and detailed, albeit saddening, assessment of the implementation of this programme, as well as of the work of the parties involved. We also thank the Secretary-General for the report by the group of oil experts. The introductory remarks by the Secretary-General indeed said it all and were most welcome — especially his remarks with regard to children. We also take this opportunity to welcome the presence in our midst of Ms. Bellamy and Mr. Sevan.

Indeed, the oil-for-food programme was not designed to meet all the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people, but neither was it meant to maximize human suffering in that country. It is clear that the programme's effectiveness and potential positive impact are severely restrained by the factors elaborated on in the report, most of which can be corrected with the necessary political will.

I shall start with the grim conclusion of the oil experts that the lamentable state of the Iraqi oil industry has not improved, and that the decline in the condition of all sectors continues. In his remarks earlier, the Ambassador of Ukraine commented on the responsibility of the Iraqi Government as well as that of the members of the Council. We share those views. While the Government of Iraq bears its own responsibilities, we are seriously concerned about the apparent lack of will on the part of the Council to take proactive steps to prevent a potential massive loss of life and environmental disaster. The Secretary-General already recommended in October last year that the allocation for oil spare parts and equipment be increased, but six months later it is still not certain that we will heed the warnings. The state of the Iraqi oil industry was known to us even before the findings of the oil experts. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the Government of Iraq is to scale down its production and export of oil. Long-term damage to the oil industry of Iraq, as mentioned in the report, can only do permanent damage to the welfare of the Iraqi people.

Therefore it is imperative that long-term infrastructure requirements and investment needs are indeed addressed, for only the revival of the Iraq economy can meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. An Iraq whose social and economic fabric has been destroyed will not only affect the Iraqi people, but will also not serve the interests of its neighbours.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) representative in Baghdad has recently again confirmed UNICEF's findings of last year on how children in Iraq have been disproportionately affected by the sanctions regime. This situation continues to deteriorate and could result in an irreversible breakdown of the social, cultural and economic fabric. Central to this issue and hampering the effectiveness of the programme is the matter of holds and delayed deliveries. The high number of holds on and delays affecting individual contracts is a matter that certainly needs to be reviewed.

This report again reveals the profoundly negative effect holds have on sectors crucial to the most vulnerable groups, such as children. It is particularly alarming that little or no improvement has occurred in sectors such as water, sanitation and electricity. For example, the progress recorded as a result of the arrival of medical supplies has been compromised by the very high death rate resulting from acute respiratory disease, as cited in paragraph 138 of the report. Among those severely affected by acute respiratory diseases are children. Even more frightening, only one out of 10 children is being correctly treated, only 9 per cent of pneumonia cases are correctly treated and only 4 per cent of children are systematically checked for danger signs. One can therefore ask, are there no more children in Iraq today? Is everyone considered an adult?

Truly, the images coming out of Iraq regarding the situation of children are disheartening. According to UNICEF, unacceptably high mortality and morbidity rates persist.

Not long ago many of us might have seen a programme entitled *Cry Freetown*, which was about children in Sierra Leone. Having spoken to many of my colleagues privately, I know that we were all touched by what we saw. Last night on ITN another equally sad programme was shown, this time about Iraqi children. The messages regarding those children cannot but touch everybody. One does not need to be a mother or a father for one's heart to bleed at what the Iraqi children are going through; one needs only to be human. We cannot use political concerns to address humanitarian needs. We therefore look forward to the comments by Ms. Bellamy, as requested by the delegation of Jamaica.

We support the recommendations proposed by the Secretary-General to address this matter. In particular we support looking into an expanded role for the observation mechanism. I believe, as do some who spoke before me, that indeed it is time for an impact assessment of these sanctions.

As far back as 1997, it became clear that the programme as constituted could not prevent the continued deterioration of the health and nutritional well-being of the Iraqi people. My delegation welcomes the progress achieved in certain areas, such as the approval of the lists of foodstuffs and educational items. We trust that the lists of pharmaceutical and medical supplies, as well as those for basic medical and agricultural equipment, will be approved soon and that all of them will be reviewed regularly to allow for expansion. However, we also note the references to the number of instances where the sanctions Committee failed to reach consensus on matters vital to the administration of the programme. My delegation supports the Secretary-General in his call for efforts to be renewed to resolve the outstanding issues. We further welcome the recommendations to the Government of Iraq and the Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the programme.

My delegation joins those who have expressed disappointment about the inability of the Council and the Government of Iraq to reach an agreement on arrangements enabling Iraqi pilgrims to perform the Hajj this year. We sincerely hope that the situation will change next year.

Finally, my delegation wishes to see the timely and full implementation of resolution 1284 (1999). In this regard, it is important for the Government of Iraq to resume cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Tripartite Commission and the Technical Subcommittee, as reiterated by the Council in section B of resolution 1284 (1999). We look forward to the report of the Secretary-General on this issue.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation expresses its profound thanks and appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this important and timely open meeting of the Council on this subject. We acknowledge the presence of Ms. Carol Bellamy and Mr. Benon Sevan. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraphs 28 and 30 of resolution 1284 (1999) and paragraph 5 of resolution 1281 (1999). We also endorse the Secretary-General's recommendations for a total allocation of $600 million to finance the procurement of oil spare parts and equipment for phases VI and VII to offset permanent damage to the oil-bearing structures in Iraq.

Poor oilfield husbandry — the direct result of the many holds on oil spare parts and equipment — has resulted in irreversible damage to individual oil reservoirs. Oil revenue derived from these fields is critical to the success of the oil-for-food programme, but should not be treated merely as an infinite source of funding for the programme. This depletable natural resource does not belong solely to the current generation; it also belongs to future generations of Iraqis. Hence, there is a need to ensure its sustainability, which is currently severely impaired by the numerous holds on oil spare parts.

These extra allocations should also be used to ensure the safety of personnel working in extremely dangerous and hazardous conditions. There is also a need to provide for the purchase of the requisite equipment for the protection of the environment. In this regard, we would like to draw attention to the potential environmental crisis — a crisis that is waiting to happen — as a result of the deteriorating facilities in the Mina-al-Bakr offshore loading terminal. Again, the major contributing factor is the holds. The Secretary-General has, on numerous occasions, belaboured this point and alerted us to the environmental catastrophe that would result from oil spillage. The transboundary nature of such pollution means that its impact would not be restricted to Iraqi shores, but would also be felt by Kuwait and neighbouring countries.

We sincerely hope that the enhancement of the observation and monitoring capabilities in the oil sector will result in a significant lifting of the holds. This approach should be extended to the humanitarian sectors as well, where significant holds remain in critical infrastructure projects that provide for safe drinking water and electricity generation.

For almost a decade, the most comprehensive and punitive sanctions ever imposed on a people have destroyed Iraq as a modern State, decimated its people and ruined its agriculture, educational and health-care systems, as well as its infrastructure. The devastating effects of the sanctions testify to the failure of comprehensive sanctions as a policy tool. Such sanctions violate basic human rights — the right to live with dignity and, indeed, the right to life itself. The sanctions regime has brought about a humanitarian crisis of enormous proportions. This is beyond dispute. The

tragedy is that, while much of the devastation can be prevented, it has been allowed to continue. The situation is so deplorable that, to their great credit, a group of concerned legislators in the United States Congress have felt compelled to pronounce themselves on the subject. They have characterized the sanctions regime as "infanticide masquerading as policy". Clearly, the sanctions do more than hurt; they kill, especially those who are most vulnerable.

We are all too familiar with the estimate by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in its recent report that over 5,000 children under the age of five years die each month due to the effects of the sanctions. That would make the total over a period of nine years a staggering half a million. How ironic it is that the same policy that is supposed to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction has itself become a weapon of mass destruction, resulting in the deaths of innocent children. In the name of the international community, United Nations economic sanctions are incapacitating an entire society. To add insult to injury, the entire programme of deprivation being imposed on the Iraqi people and the mechanism instituted for that purpose are being paid for with proceeds from the sale of their own oil.

My delegation fully appreciates the legitimate security concerns that have been expressed in respect of Iraq in the wake of its invasion of Kuwait a decade ago. Likewise, we sympathize and empathize with the families of the more than 600 Kuwaiti missing persons and other third-country nationals, who need to be accounted for and more aggressively sought. We support the efforts of Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov, the recently appointed coordinator tasked with resolving this issue as well as with facilitating the return of the country's national archives and other property that were taken out of Kuwait. These are important humanitarian issues on which there is complete consensus in the Council. We therefore call on Iraq to fulfil its obligation in this regard, along with all of its other international obligations, to continue its participation in the Tripartite Commission and the Technical Subcommittee and to cooperate in resolving these issues once and for all, in the interest of humanitarianism and for the sake of restoring normalcy to the region.

The economic sanctions imposed upon Iraq since 1991 have inflicted suffering primarily on civilians, especially the most vulnerable members of the Iraqi population, namely, the elderly, the sick and children. We believe their continued suffering for an indefinite period in the future is incompatible with the spirit and letter of the United Nations Charter. The deprivation caused by the embargo is equally incompatible with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has been said that the sanctions regime imposed on Iraq is not a form of development aid. Indeed, it is not: it is a form of punishment. But for how long should this collective punishment continue? For the unfortunate victims, who are desperately poor after a decade of sanctions, poverty is a life sentence that daily crushes their human spirit and dignity as a people. Unless this is the intended objective of the sanctions — and I do not believe it is — their prolongation is, in Malaysia's view, inhumane and unconscionable.

We believe that the loss of lives and the untold suffering of the civilian population are excessive in relation to the concrete and direct benefits accruing from efforts to disarm Iraq. UNICEF is not the only United Nations agency to report on the negative impact of the sanctions regime. The World Health Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations support similar conclusions. A number of concerned and courageous individuals, notably Mr. Denis Halliday, Mr. Hans Von Sponeck and Ms. Jutta Burghardt, who are intimately acquainted with the realities on the ground, have all confirmed what we already know, or do not wish to know: that the continuing economic sanctions on the Iraqi people are indefensible and must be terminated as soon as possible. We believe that more and more people of conscience and courage will speak out in the weeks and months ahead, as the deplorable humanitarian situation in Iraq can no longer be defended with a clear conscience by men and women of good will.

It is time for the international community to craft a new policy on Iraq that addresses the legitimate security concerns of the international community but does not inflict indiscriminate suffering on the Iraqi people. If we are serious in our intention and efforts to alleviate the suffering of the innocent Iraqi people, there should be no linkage between progress in disarming Iraq and the humanitarian efforts being undertaken by the Council. The economic sanctions should be drastically overhauled, eased and delinked from military sanctions. The oil-for-food programme, a humanitarian measure that was meant to be temporary, is no panacea to mitigate the effects of the sanctions.

The humanitarian panel established by this Council and headed by Ambassador Celso Amorim of Brazil, a former member of the Council, made an important

observation which I wish to quote because of its pertinence to the subject under discussion. It observed that

> "even if all the humanitarian supplies were provided in a timely manner, the humanitarian programme implemented pursuant to resolution 986 (1995) can admittedly only meet but a small fraction of the priority needs of the Iraqi people. Regardless of the improvements that might be brought about in the implementation of the current humanitarian programme — in terms of approval procedures, better performance by the Iraqi Government or funding levels — the magnitude of the humanitarian needs is such that they cannot be met within the context of the parameters set forth in resolution 986 (1995)".

Let us pause and ponder this very pertinent observation.

Resolution 1284 (1999) seeks, *inter alia*, to streamline the approval process in the sanctions Committee, secure improvement in performance on the part of Iraq and remove the oil export ceiling. However, the prohibitions on the dual-use items — critical inputs in many civilian projects — remain very much in place. This resolution does not even begin to address the essence of the humanitarian problem. How can such incremental increases hope to succeed when the cause of the problem is structural in nature?

Much of the civilian infrastructure in Iraq was destroyed during the war and in subsequent bombings of the country, which continue even now in the illegal so-called no-fly zones, which violate Iraq's sovereignty and further complicate the situation. Iraq cannot rebuild or repair the damage to its pre-war status because the disbursement of money for the oil-for-food programme is controlled by the Security Council. Many of the needed spares and equipment are prohibited by the sanctions regime. Holds on contracts, worth hundreds of millions of dollars, hamper overall efforts in some critical sectors to alleviate the humanitarian situation. What good are food and medicines if clean water is not available? Extensive holds in the electricity and oil sectors have serious consequences for the people of Iraq.

In 1990, prior to the adoption of resolution 661 (1990), no study was done to advise the Council on the probable humanitarian impact of the proposed sanctions. That was a regrettable omission, but that mistake should not be compounded by a failure to carry out an impact assessment. The sanctions should be subjected to monitoring and regular reviews during the operation of the sanctions regime, as is provided for.

The social costs of the sanctions have been enormous. Children have been compelled to work, beg or engage in crime in order to survive. Young women have been compelled into prostitution out of dire economic circumstances. Fathers have abandoned their families, unable to cope with the economic and psychological pressures.

Iraq's education system has collapsed, with thousands of teachers leaving their posts because of the unbearable working conditions. The drop-out rate for primary and secondary levels is estimated at 30 per cent. Less than 4 per cent of funds available were allocated to the education sector. The difficulty of getting educational materials essentially means that an intellectual embargo is also in effect.

The health services have not been able to handle preventable diseases — such as diarrhoea, gastroenteritis, respiratory tract infection and polio — from spreading to epidemic proportions. Hospitals attempt to function with collapsed water and sewerage systems and without even basic supplies for hygiene and minimal care. UNICEF estimates that 30 per cent of Iraqi children are chronically and acutely malnourished. These children will be physically and mentally stunted for the rest of their lives.

Iraq's younger generation is growing up resentful of the sanctions, bitter, angry and alienated from the world. An entire people have been stripped of their pride and dignity and may find it difficult to collaborate with the international community. There will assuredly be long-term social and political impacts of the sanctions.

These are but some of the more apparent examples of the pervasive impact of the sanctions. The true and complete picture will be known only after a comprehensive impact assessment of the sanctions regime has been made.

Even if sanctions were to be lifted today, the problems afflicting Iraq today would persist well into the future. We believe that the real impact is more pervasive than we really know. On the economic front, economic reconstruction efforts, by one conservative estimate, will need between $50 billion and $100 billion just for essential infrastructure utilities. External debts will also be another burden that Iraq will have to bear even as it attempts to rehabilitate the economy.

There have been disturbing reports about the effects of depleted uranium arising from shells used against Iraq during the Gulf War. The highly toxic particles have been known to cause cancer and to result in irreversible damage to the kidneys and deformation of the foetus. There have been reports of a disproportionately high incidence of cancer among Iraqis in the south, where these munitions were largely used. The matter should be investigated and assistance rendered to Iraq to overcome the problems posed by these toxic wastes.

The defenders of continued, relentless sanctions have argued that they are necessary to prevent Iraq from threatening its neighbours and rebuilding its arsenal. The goal of these sanctions, however, seems to have changed. The original United Nations resolutions imposed sanctions to pressure Iraq to eliminate its programmes of weapons of mass destruction. Policy statements emanating from some capitals, however, suggest that sanctions will remain in place until certain political objectives have been achieved. This policy clearly undermines the original objective of the sanctions, around which the international consensus against Iraq was originally based, and makes children and families in Iraq virtual hostages to the political deadlock between Governments. The continuing demonizing of Iraq must stop if we are serious in our professed concern for the plight of the Iraqi people.

After more than nine years of the most comprehensive economic embargo on a State Member of this Organization, it is clear that the continuation of the sanctions regime in its present form is morally indefensible. Its continuation will only prolong the agony of the long-suffering Iraqi people and damage the credibility of the United Nations — this Council in particular. By sustaining economic sanctions against Iraq in the full knowledge of their deplorable consequences, the Security Council will continue to undermine the Charter of the United Nations. It is time for us to view the matter not, for the most part, through the narrow prism of security — which is important, but which has substantially been addressed — but also and equally frequently through the broader prism of humanity.

Accordingly my delegation strongly urges the Council to commission an immediate and comprehensive impact assessment of the sanctions on Iraq. The periodic United Nations reports, while they are useful and serve their purpose, simply do not tell the whole story; only a comprehensive study can do so. Such a study is not only necessary, it is long overdue. In appealing to the Council to act on this call, let me remind Council members of the sad and unnecessary deaths of the innocent children of Iraq by quoting the noted Lebanese philosopher and writer who wrote,

> "They died in silence, for humanity had closed its ears to their cries".

In this regard I would like to recommend that Council members view an important documentary film made by Mr. John Pilger, entitled *Paying the Price: Killing the Children of Iraq*, which was produced by Carlton Television of London and first aired in the United Kingdom on ITV. Viewing it might perhaps open our ears to the cries of those Iraqi children who are still living.

I have spoken at length on this subject. For Malaysia, the issue of sanctions on Iraq is a matter of great importance and concern to our people, as it is to other peoples elsewhere. It is a matter of humanitarian concern and of morality, not of polemics. For us, it is a matter of conscience, especially in view of our membership. I believe it is the same for many other members of the Council, as well as for those outside of it.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful to you, Mr. President, for convening this formal meeting, and to the Secretary-General for his report and for his participation in this meeting. We would also like to extend our thanks to the Office of the Iraq Programme and to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for their efforts on the subject before the Council.

The grave humanitarian situation affecting the Iraqi population is nothing new for the Security Council. It was because of the impact the sanctions regime was having on the civilian population that, almost as soon as sanctions were imposed on that country — and particularly since 1995 — the Council began devising exceptions to it in order at least to avoid increasing the suffering of the Iraqi people. It was in that context that the delegation of Argentina actively participated in the negotiations that led to the adoption five years ago of resolution 986 (1995), around Easter of that year.

The humanitarian situation in Iraq improved with the establishment of the oil-for-food programme. But we then learned, through reports issued by the panels presided over by Ambassador Celso Amorim beginning in February 1999, that the resources generated by that

programme were insufficient to meet the basic needs of the people, in spite of the improvements that had been gradually made in that mechanism.

The crisis that made it impossible for the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) to continue to fulfil the mandate given to it by resolution 687 (1991) did nothing to ease the humanitarian situation in Iraq. The adverse political context prevailing at that time prevented the Council from reaching the necessary agreements to take measures to substantively improve the situation.

It took us almost a year to redesign the regime applicable to Iraq, both in terms of sanctions and in terms of disarmament and ongoing monitoring and verification. The result of that process was the adoption of resolution 1284 (1999), which embodied our hopes that the United Nations would once again be in Iraq, with the clear possibility of a suspension of the sanctions regime. Barely three months after the adoption of that resolution, we can see both positive and negative features in the present situation.

First of all, we are concerned that the process of contract approval in the sanctions Committee is still far slower than would be optimal for improving certain sectors essential to the well-being of the civilian population of Iraq. The lack of elements vital to restoring electricity-generating capacity and drinking water supplies are examples of this. A solution to this question requires more than the improvements that can be made through the sanctions Committee. It is also necessary that the providers of goods to Iraq strictly comply with the terms of agreed contracts.

We are also concerned about the state of Iraq's oil sector infrastructure, which, according to the reports we have received, is increasingly lamentable. The lack of security and the environmental damage caused by this situation threaten future generations of Iraqis, whom we wish to see spared the hardships being suffered by the present generation.

It is for these reasons that we support the draft resolution making it possible to use a total of $600 million out of the funds generated in accordance with resolutions 1242 (1999) and 1281 (1999) to purchase spare parts for the oil sector. Our delegation has also supported these initiatives in the Iraq sanctions Committee, and we are prepared to increase the amounts assigned to this sector once again if the Secretary-General so recommends on the basis of expert reports.

Another source of concern for us is the prompt application of the disarmament aspects of resolution 1284 (1999). It is a positive sign that the members of the College of Commissioners have already been appointed. We hope that we will have the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) organizational plan in the coming days. That resolution remains a source of hope for our delegation, notwithstanding the difficulties we have encountered in implementing it. The suspension of sanctions is a real possibility under the terms of that resolution and, in the current political context, it would seem the most productive way of definitively alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people, who are not the targets of those sanctions.

There can be no doubt that the sanctions — which have a purpose and which are aimed at the Government — are one of the chief causes of the humanitarian situation in Iraq. But those problems are compounded by other aspects related to respect for human rights. We hope that in the near future Iraqi civilians will not only have their material needs met, but will also be able to live under acceptable political conditions in which their basic rights are respected. The first step will be the full application of resolution 1284 (1999), which will require all delegations in the Council to renew their commitment to this agenda item. We hope to contribute our own efforts to making this possible.

Mr. van Walsum (Netherlands): I would like to add a word, if I may, on Iraq's obligations regarding the repatriation of all Kuwaiti nationals, or their remains. I did not mention this issue in my intervention this morning because it was not referred to in the report of the Secretary-General. But, as other delegations have made reference to the issue, I would like to join them in welcoming the appointment of Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov as high-level coordinator.

The Council should not discuss humanitarian matters concerning Iraq without reminding the Government of Iraq of its commitment to facilitate the repatriation of all Kuwaiti and third country nationals, as reiterated in operative paragraph 13 of resolution 1284 (1999).

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Bangladesh.

First of all, Bangladesh considers it important that the Security Council is holding an open briefing on the humanitarian situation in Iraq, enabling the general

membership of the United Nations to join the Council's deliberations on this important issue.

We thank the Secretary-General for his excellent statement on the subject matter of today's meeting and also for presenting the comprehensive report contained in document S/2000/208, consolidating a number of elements, as requested in Council resolutions.

Our thanks are due to Mr. Benon Sevan and his colleagues in the Office of the Iraq Programme, who have been fulfilling the task given to them with professionalism and commitment.

The Secretary-General's report dwells at length on the present deplorable state of the oil industry of Iraq. The group of experts commissioned by the United Nations stated in its report that the previously noted generally lamentable state of the Iraqi oil industry has not improved and that the decline in some cases is accelerating, posing the threat of serious environmental degradation. The experts noted that unless key items of spare parts and equipment are made available and commissioned within a short time, Iraq's oil production will severely drop, which would seriously affect the oil-for-food programme itself. My delegation therefore strongly endorses the Secretary-General's recommendation to the Council to approve the request to increase the allocation for oil spare parts and equipment from $300 million to $600 million for phase VI, and is therefore happy to support the draft resolution that has been circulated in that regard. However, my delegation feels that raising the allocation to the proposed level would be self-defeating if the requests for spare parts for Iraq's oil industry were stuck because of the holds placed on them. According to the Secretary-General's report, the total value of contract applications on hold for oil spare parts and equipment as of 31 January 2000 was $291 million. We would also urge the Council to reach consensus on the selection of additional oil overseers to help the Office of the Iraq Programme to expedite processing contracts on oil supply from Iraq.

The Secretary-General's report is a poignant reminder of the fact that there has been a serious deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Iraq and that the situation needs urgent attention. As the Secretary-General said this morning, the United Nations is — and we believe always should be — on the side of the weak and the vulnerable. A great deal needs to be done to improve the situation in order to alleviate the suffering of the common people of Iraq, who are deprived of their basic humanitarian needs. It is evident from the current food security, education and health situation in Iraq that the sanctions have hit the Iraqi people in an indiscriminate way. So it is no wonder that many have described such measures as immoral.

The Bangladesh delegation is fully prepared to extend wholehearted support to measures which aim at easing the suffering of the Iraqi people and improving the humanitarian situation in Iraq. We also feel strongly that there is a need for carrying out a sanctions impact assessment to determine the consequences of such measures on the already deteriorating humanitarian situation in Iraq.

The food security and health situation in Iraq presents an especially dismal picture. The caloric level among the Iraqi people, particularly children, is critically low, and the caloric target set by the United Nations distribution plan is nowhere near being attained. The report of the Secretary-General says that the overall situation in the water sanitation sector has seen very little improvement over the past two years due both to an insufficient level of funds and to the high value of holds. Hospitals are seriously handicapped by lack of facilities, due again to a large number of equipment orders being placed on hold. The recent figures from the United Nations Children's Fund have shown a marked upward trend in child mortality in a country where such mortality used to be one of the lowest in the world. The Council owes it to itself to address the problem of the devastating impact of the sanctions regime on the people of Iraq and to do everything possible through effective measures on its part to alleviate the suffering and improve the humanitarian situation in that country. We in the Council have to get our act together and take some constructive steps in this regard. The important decision which the Council took on the question of Iraqi pilgrims to the Hajj last month was an eminent example of how the Council can act quickly and innovatively, keeping the interests of the common people of Iraq uppermost in its mind.

Before concluding, I would like to draw the Council's attention to another, often forgotten, dimension of the humanitarian situation which we are discussing today, and that is the important question of prisoners of war and persons unaccounted for in Iraq. Over the last decade, the matter has reached a serious point and needs urgent resolution to ameliorate the untold suffering of the large number of affected families, not only in Kuwait but in a number of other countries, including mine. We would like to see the high-level coordinator on this matter, Ambassador Yuli M. Vorontsov, recently

appointed by the Secretary-General, make progress in bringing this tragic situation to a close.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

Taking into account the various statements made in the course of today's meeting, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Ms. Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, to respond to some of the issues raised in statements made this morning and this afternoon.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Ms. Bellamy to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Bellamy: Let me first say on behalf of my colleagues in the humanitarian community, who are working very hard on behalf of humanitarian concerns in Iraq, that I certainly appreciate the positive comments made today by members of the Security Council.

I wish to comment briefly on two issues that were raised. The representative of France expressed interest in the modalities of the cash component. As I have said to the Council in the past, it is our view that the provision in resolution 1284 (1999) for a cash component and for local procurement needs to be pursued quite vigorously. I think that there is consensus — certainly among those of us who are working on humanitarian issues — that making a cash component available to the centre and the south is critical for the efficiency of our programmes and for sustainability. It will allow for payment for the labour and the local supplies needed for the physical rehabilitation of infrastructure, for example schools and health facilities. It will also support the transport and installation of supplies purchased under resolution 986 (1995), such as water and sewage treatment equipment, as well as staff training, which is something we are not able to do at this point because the focus is largely on infrastructure.

I would say, however, that at this point we fully support the recent tasking by the Office of the Iraq Programme of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) to conduct a cash component review, and we at the United Nations Children's Fund are certainly committed to working closely with them in the hope that a modality or a framework for implementation can be devised. We have suggested in the past that the targeted nutrition programme might serve as an opportunity to pilot the modalities. We appreciate the fact that some of the members of the Council have offered concrete suggestions on the modalities, and so following the evaluation and review by UNOPS, I think we would all be in a better position to come back with some specifics in terms of modalities.

With respect to sanctions, again, as we have said in the past, as a fund and programme of the United Nations we recognize that sanctions are an instrument of the international community. But, again, if I might reiterate the comments that I made to the Security Council in February 1999, in the interest of children we believe that sanctions should not be imposed without obligatory, immediate and enforceable humanitarian exemptions, along with mechanisms for monitoring their impact on children and other vulnerable groups. We do believe that sanctions have certainly been a factor, but we do not believe that sanctions are the only factor, and we think that is what is very important to recognize. The effects of two wars and the failure of the Government of Iraq to invest in social services, particularly in health and education, have also contributed, certainly, to the rise in child mortality. We think it would be much too simple a conclusion to just assume that the conditions have deteriorated for one reason alone.

I would conclude by turning again to the cash component and saying that this is something which we must seek very much — the participation of the Government of Iraq on the cash component as well, because we can come up with many modalities, but ultimately we have to be able to implement it.

The President: I thank Ms. Bellamy for her comments.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue consideration of the item on the agenda will be fixed in consultation with the members of the Council.

The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.